

On Measuring Distance: THE FIELD

by Helen Hughes

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Tamsen Hopkinson and Shannon Te Ao, *Tāhū* (installation view), 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists. Photo: Christian Capurro.



Installation view of works by Shiraz Sadikeen, Ming Ranginui and Dean Cross, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists, Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau, and Station, Melbourne & Sydney. Photo: Christian Capurro.



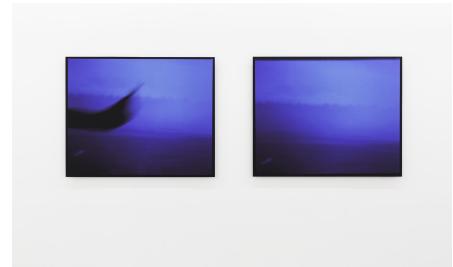
Installation view of works by Shannon Te Ao and Bella Besen, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Amy May Stuart.



Ming Ranginui, *grants and wishes* (detail), 2022, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Amy May Stuart.



Shiraz Sadikeen, *Petty Cash*, 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Christian Capurro.



Shannon Te Ao, *Hara*, 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Christian Capurro.

As Gertrude Contemporary's twenty-third annual guest curator, Tamsen Hopkinson took the International System of Units and two historical exhibitions at the National Gallery of Victoria as catalysts to initiate her exhibition THE FIELD, on show from 15 April to 11 June 2023 in Naarm Melbourne. Featuring Aotearoa artists Ming Ranginui, Shannon Te Ao and Shiraz Sadikeen alongside five Australian practitioners, Hughes considers more widely how the works Hopkinson has curated for THE FIELD question universalising, binary, and institutional conceptions of perception, identity, and sovereignty.

The proper place to begin talking about *THE FIELD*, curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, is outside. Driving past Gertrude Contemporary on High Street, Thornbury, in Naarm Melbourne, passers-by glimpse a long, single strip of white light that horizontally bisects the glass façade of the gallery. It is a work

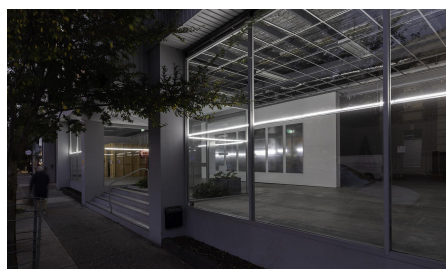
titled *Tāhū* by Hopkinson (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa, Ngāti Pāhauwera) and Shannon Te Ao (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Wairangi), one of the eight invited artists in the exhibition.

Visible both inside and outside the exhibition space, but optimally viewed from outside by night, *Tāhū* is a reference to the site-specific work *Fault* by Te Aupōuri artist Ralph Hōtere and Pākehā (European New Zealander) artist Bill Culbert, which has been installed in the windows of Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington's City Gallery since 1994.^[01] *Fault* comprises black-tinted windows by Hōtere, and a double, diagonal line of fluorescent tubes by Culbert, the combination of which speaks to the fault line on which the city of Te Whanganui-a-Tara sits, as well as to Māori–Pākehā relations—to the sense of both groups walking side by side without necessarily being a unified political or social body.

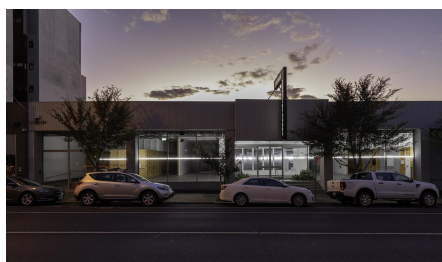
Hopkinson and Te Ao's take on *Fault* invokes slightly different connotations through its title. Hopkinson notes that *Tāhū*, from te reo Māori (the Māori language), can refer to the ridge pole of a house, the direct line of ancestry, the subject of a sentence, or a plot.^[02] Their work operates differently in the context of Naarm, where it is not a collaboration between local Indigenous and settler artists, but rather two artists indigenous to another land, negotiating their presence as guests and allies on sovereign, unceded Wurundjeri land. Hopkinson describes *Tāhū* as the means by which she and Te Ao “decided to position the exhibition as kaupapa Māori [having a Māori foundation] while also aligning ourselves with Aboriginal Sovereignty.”^[03] Presenting itself to people outside the gallery, *Tāhū* also adopts the status of public artwork, broadening the viewership of the exhibition to people who might not otherwise access the gallery. In so doing, the work addresses class. This is a concern that courses, loudly here and softly there, throughout the entire exhibition.

Crucially, *Tāhū* also offers a statement about how Hopkinson is inhabiting the role of curator in this show, which is significant in the context of “Octopus,” Gertrude Contemporary's signature exhibition series, which has seen a different guest curator invited annually since 2001 to produce a whole-gallery show. Hopkinson occupies this space, traditionally filled by institutional curators—including Kimberley Moulton (Yorta Yorta), Joel Stern, Georgie

Meaghre, to name just a few from recent years—purposefully as an artist/curator. As a matter of principle, she destabilises the hierarchy between curatorial producer and participating artist. Hopkinson explains to me that the curator–artist divide could be perceived as “separate to kaupapa Māori and belonging [instead] to a Western colonial power structure.”^[04] Unpicking the cultural assumptions of this separation and instead fostering lateral and collective relationalities between participants is one of her exhibition’s most interesting, even if subtly sung, contributions to curatorial practice.



Tamsen Hopkinson and Shannon Te Ao, *Tāhū* (installation view), 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May –11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists. Photo: Christian Capurro.



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Hopkinson directly addresses the Western model of curatorial practice in her exhibition’s critical engagement with *The Field*, the 1968 exhibition of largely colour-field abstraction at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), in Naarm, and its remake, *The Field Revisited*, fifty years later at the same institution. *The Field* has been described as a “watershed moment that heralded the institutionalisation of modernism in Australia.”^[05] Curated by Brian Finemore and John Stringer, it was distinctive for its floor-to-ceiling silver-foil-coated walls upon which the work was hung.^[06]

¹ An undoubtedly heavy-handed curatorial gesture, art historians David Homewood and Paris Lettau have argued that the silver walls offered a sense in which “all the artworks were unified as a whole.”^[07] Indeed, the late 1960s and early 1970s represented a tipping point in the history of curatorial practice, sometimes at the expense of individual artists and artworks. This was the moment

that saw the rise of the figure of the individual, so-called genius, curator.

When *The Field* was recreated—or “re-curated”—in 2018, it formed part of a suite of curatorial projects worldwide in which institutions restaged seminal exhibitions, often from their own archives. One of the most frequently cited examples is the restaging of Harald Szeeman’s 1969 exhibition *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, at the Fondazione Prada, Venice, in 2013. While *When Attitudes Become Form* is considered one of the most rigorous and exacting examples of re-curation, one of the more progressive is the staging of *Other Primary Structures* at the Jewish Museum in New York in 2014. When restaging the watershed exhibition of minimalist sculpture *Primary Structures: Younger British and American Sculptors* of 1966, the curators used the opportunity to redress the Western-centrism of the initial exhibition; they expanded their remit to include relevant contemporaneous works by non-Western artists like Rasheed Araeen, Lygia Clark, David Medalla, Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Pape, and Lee Ufan.

Hopkinson (like many of us here in Naarm) was, however, struck by the NGV’s total lack of accountability in remaking *The Field*—an exhibition that was highly exclusionary in the first place. The lineup of the 1968 original and 2018 revisitation was—lo and behold—almost all male and definitively white. The NGV seemed to be concerned with reproducing a literal facsimile of the 1968 show. Where original artworks could not be located, the institution made black-and-white, to-scale reproductions that were hung in their place—a throwback, perhaps, to the 1939 *Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art* that toured Australia, featuring colour facsimiles of European masterpieces where the originals could not be loaned. This equivalence struck between copy and original also recalls the 1982 NGV exhibition *Popism*, curated by Paul Taylor, which cleverly connected white Australia’s overreliance on second-hand, second-rate copies of artworks from the northern hemisphere to its culturally bankrupt national identity. Hopkinson thinks of the black-and-white reproductions in *The Field* as “ghost paintings”—a concept that has been carried over into her exhibition’s poster design by Narelle Brewer.^[08] Here, installation photographs of *THE FIELD* by Melbourne artist Amy

Stuart are haunted by semi-transparent objects from the show. The poster, which features a characteristically exquisite poem by Australian First Nations writer Tristian Harwood, has been designed to fold in half and slot perfectly in between the exhibition catalogues for the 1968 and 2018 editions of *The Field* (issued as a double volume in 2018 by the NGV). This gesture represents Hopkinson's response to the question: "How do we insert ourselves into history?"^[09]

The 1968 and 2018 versions of *The Field* also account for the strange, shimmering presence of silver that courses through Hopkinson's exhibition like a rich mineral vein. When inviting artists to participate in *THE FIELD*, she gave them three curatorial prompts: 1) the historical iterations and implications of NGV's *The Field*; 2) the colour and metallurgic substance of silver; and 3) a unit of measurement—each artist was given one of the seven from the International System of Units (SI). She deployed the SI framework, she notes, "as a position against the 'readymade' conditions of identity politics and institutional exclusion—i.e., a literal system of measurement used internationally."^[10] By this, I take Hopkinson to mean that she is critical of the idea that diversity or sovereignty are entities that could be isolated and measured objectively, rather than omnipresent, deeply felt, and structurally enacted.



Bella Besen, *whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens*, 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists. Photo: Christian Capurro.



Bella Besen, *whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens* (detail), 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Amy May Stuart.



Installation view of works by Nicola Blumenthal, Shannon Te Ao and Bella Besen, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Christian Capurro.

Silver was, as we have seen, a dominant presence in *The Field*, where it unified the individual artworks whilst reflecting an image of the viewer in the act of looking back at themselves. Compelling viewers to self-reflect was, for Hopkinson, also a means of “flipping responsibility” onto the viewing public on matters of race and class, rather than letting it continue to be the burden of exhibiting artists and curators.^[11] Silver also has culturally distinct resonances for Hopkinson. Silver—hiriwa in te reo Māori, she adds—is closely associated with the national emblem of Aotearoa, the silver fern, which is a nocturnal navigational tool.^[12] Silver ferns can be snapped and turned upside down; their silver undersides reflect moonlight, charting an incandescent pathway through an otherwise dark terrain.

Once you enter through *Tāhū*, whose singular line you have to rupture momentarily when you open the front doors of Gertrude, the first work you encounter is Naarm-based Australian artist Bella Besen’s suite of six silver-panelled wall works. Each is subtly embossed with the phrase “whatever happens happens.” The metric unit that Hopkinson gave Besen as her cue was the metre, the measurement of length. Each panel is a standard-issue Australian door (204 cm high, 82 cm wide, and 2.5 cm deep) and is oriented as such (vertically). Each door is wrapped in silver car vinyl. Both the door and the car vinyl are materials that connote transportation and passageway—between rooms, places, and worlds.^[13] The vinyl gives the viewer a dulled reflection of themselves, as well as the glow of *Tāhū* behind them—nodding to the silver walls in *The Field*.

Beyond them, the space is divided into two symmetrical galleries. Like lungs, or chambers of the heart, there are opposing senses of movement—inwards and outwards—that seem counterbalanced across the two. Even before entering them, we are immersed in a soundtrack by local musicians Mikey Young and Raven Mahon. Young and Mahon were given the cue of the ampere—the unit of measurement for electrical currents. Their track *Ever decreasing circles* comprises progressively distorted loops of clarinet, synthesiser, bass, cello, guitar, piano, and harmonica. It functions to score the visitor’s choreography through the gallery—not as a linear pathway but something rather more recursive.^[14]

Behind Besen's doors is Aotearoa-born artist Shiraz Sadiqueen's work: two paintings (one a scented Jean Dubuffet remake with crushed incense as a pigment) and a suite of deconstructed readymade objects including elements from a clock and a petty-cash box. The clock and the cash box speak to Sadiqueen's unit of measurement—the second, the measure of time, which, as Marx noted in numerous discussions of the rise of clocks and watches in step with the industrial revolution, is crucial for regulating wage labour in the factory.

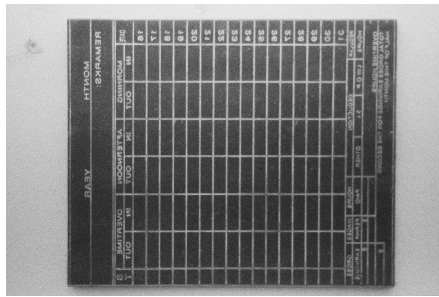
Class consciousness notably inflects other aspects of Sadiqueen's work, including the dead-bolt he has cast in sterling silver, which sits casually in the petty-cash box that lies on the gallery floor as if flung there. This silver detail recalls an earlier work from 2021, *Securicraft*, in which two anthropomorphic-looking window locks (objects that speak to private property and its thresholds) have been installed on the gallery wall—one with a silver spoon poking out of its “mouth.” A similar gesture (an object of low value transformed into one of high value) is at play in the crisp painting *Sack* (2023), in which Sadiqueen has translated a roll of rubbish-bag logos into a hard-edge painting in black and grey—resulting in a work that would have looked at home in *The Field* back in 1968.

Elsewhere, Sadiqueen has used bone wax (applied to stop bleeding in bones during surgery) to both patch holes in the gallery wall around his work and to fill a gap in the centre of a New Zealand one-dollar coin, where the late Queen's face has been punched out in a perfect circular hole. In this body of work, Sadiqueen maps the measure of time onto the measure of money, reminding us in the process of the relationship between capital (meaning head, top, chief, or foremost) and decapitation (in the sense that a capital crime means penalty of death, “thus affect[ing] the life or ‘head’”).¹

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Shiraz Sadikeen, *Petty Cash*, 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Christian Capurro.



Shiraz Sadikeen, *Wage-form*, 2022, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Amy May Stuart.



Shiraz Sadikeen, *Washer*, 2022, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Amy May Stuart.



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Shiraz Sadikeen, *Face*, 2022, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Christian Capurro.

Ming Ranginui's (Te Ati Haunui-a-Pāpārangi) work speaks to class and wage labour in an equally subtle yet insightful way. Hopkinson explains to me that Ranginui makes much of her work at, and within the hours of, her day job at a fabric store in Te Whanganui-a-Tara.^[16] Her soft sculptures are made from satin she sources from work, thereby marrying the unwaged, theoretically unalienated labour of the artist's studio to the waged, alienated labour of the store clerk.

Hopkinson gave Ranginui the SI kelvin as a prompt, which measures temperature, and which Hopkinson felt might speak to Ranginui's interest in looking for *tohu* (signs).^[17] Her work also clearly speaks to the measure of time—forming a strong connection with Sadikeen's contribution nearby. *Till the clock strikes five* (2023) appears to be a wall-mounted clock upholstered in intricately ruched, midnight-blue satin, which shimmers and catches the light, not unlike the silver fern. In the centre of *Till the*

clock strikes five is a faulty clock mechanism, where the single second-hand twitches at noon without ever advancing.

Each of Ranginui's soft sculptures in the exhibition—including the oversized bow-embellished fairy wand *grants and wishes* (2023) and the surreal, ballgown-like puffed skirt *slay Belle* (2022)—invokes the narrative of Cinderella. But in *Till the clock strikes five* it is the duration of the workday that is referenced, not the mythical cusp of midnight as in the fable. The combination of wistful fairy-tale with the reality of wage labour speaks to the way in which even the possibility of living as an artist is withheld conditionally from people who don't already have money—the “grants” in the title of *grants and wishes*, Hopkinson notes, is a wordplay on arts council grants.^[18]



Installation view of works by Ming Ranganui and Dean Cross, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists and Station, Melbourne & Sydney. Photo: Christian Capurro.



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Ming Ranganui, *Till the clock strikes five*, 2022, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Amy May Stuart.



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Ming Ranganui, *grants and wishes* (detail), 2022, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Amy May Stuart.



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Opposite Ranganui's, Dean Cross's work is, like Sadikeen's, characterised by deconstruction. Hopkinson offered the Worimi artist the SI unit of the mole, which measures substance via the number of atoms or molecules it contains. Cross's *sad state* (2022) is a disembowelled 1962 gloss-black Yamaha piano that once resided at the Australian National University's School of Music, here reduced to its smallest constituent parts: its body panels and legs lean casually against the gallery wall, where they, like Besen's doors, reflect street traffic and the white light of *Tāhū* as well as the audience navigating the space. Viewers encounter the piano's viscera in neat arrangements on the floor: the hammers and hammer rail; the weighty metal frame; wire strings (tangled in a

bundle); muffler felt; tuning pins; the keys—black sharps and flats separated from the white “natural” notes of C major.

The deconstructed piano automatically invokes the history of experimental music, ranging from exploratory improvisations on treated pianos to more extreme avant-garde gestures like Annea Lockwood’s *Piano Burning* of 1968, or Al Hansen’s Fluxus work, *Yoko Ono Piano Drop* of 1959, which was inspired by his earlier experience of having pushed a piano off the ledge of a bombed out, five-storey building in World War II-era Germany. Fluxus artists were prone to attacking the piano as a symbol of bourgeois culture as well as historical compositional traditions in need of revolutionary overthrow. Yet the gesture acquires further significance when undertaken by a First Nations artist on stolen land. In this context, the piano is so clearly symbolic of European colonisation. Its installation here represents a kind of mute explosion, in which what was formerly contained inside is expelled in a vast array of fragments.

If Cross’s *sad state* evidences a centrifugal motion, then Melbourne artist Nicola Blumenthal’s large-scale installation *Silver objects* (2023) in the neighbouring gallery evidences a centripetal force. Hopkinson gave Blumenthal the SI unit of the kilogram, the measure of weight. In recent years, Blumenthal has created a number of memorable installations in which she repurposes large, cumbersome objects that she momentarily takes out of circulation from the world at large and brings inside the gallery (often requiring enormous effort) to construct a temporary assemblage. *Silver objects* is a tableau of readymade and assisted readymade objects carefully arranged on a large, low-lying grey plinth. While there are some notable outliers (like the ornate, dark-wood cupboard in one corner of the assemblage), Blumenthal’s selection of objects pivots around hues of grey and silver: a wad of used duct tape; an upturned shopping trolley; a bedhead painted in a quick coat of grey; a tall, mirrored plinth; sheets of discarded metal; a neatly folded silver tarp.

You can glimpse Blumenthal’s inimitable sense of humour in her inclusion of a regulation-sized carry-on bag on wheels amongst all this heavy, lethargic, annoying junk—as if the artist were about to disappear effortlessly on the next flight out of Australia. It’s also

amusing that so much of the stuff in *Silver objects* is not reflective, rare silver, but absorptive, institutional grey—often reading as “neutral” if not invisible. Indeed, grey is the colour that Theodor Adorno allegedly had his lecture theatres painted so that his students would not be distracted during his classes.



Installation view of works by Nicola Blumenthal and Shannon Te Ao, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artists. Photo: Christian Capurro.



Shannon Te Ao, *Hara*, 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Christian Capurro.



Shannon Te Ao, *Hara*, 2023, in *Octopus 23: THE FIELD* curated by Tamsen Hopkinson, Gertrude Contemporary, 15 May – 11 June 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs Tāmaki Makaurau. Photo: Amy May Stuart.

The colour grey has a strong affective quality, even if that quality is akin to its own disappearance. Likewise, blue has an enduring affective association, historically linked to grief, depression, isolation, and distance. Opposite Blumenthal’s *Silver objects* are two large-format photographic prints by Te Ao titled *Hara* (2022), which are a bright, almost International Klein Blue, hue framed by thin black borders.^[19] The photographs, featuring fragments of an actor’s body in movement, were shot on film against a backdrop of rear-projected footage of land related to Te Ao and his whanaunga (extended family). These photographs represent one of the few times that Te Ao, who usually works in black and white, has recently introduced colour into his practice. Despite being strongly evocative of his whenua (land), which is pictured in the background of the photos, the images read, at first glance, as hard-edged, colour-field abstraction (not unlike the works exhibited in the 1968 *Field* exhibition)—creating a tension between the universal and the specific.

Te Ao’s unit of measurement was candela, the measure of light. He traces this measure across both the light installation *Tāhū* and the photographs of *Hara*. Faraway mountains—like Te Ao’s whenua

glimpsed in the background of these two prints—often appear blue to the human eye due to the way light scatters amongst atoms at a distance. The writer Rebecca Solnit is famously preoccupied by this:

blue at the far edge of what can be seen, that colour of horizons, of remote mountain ranges, of anything far away. The colour of that distance is the colour of an emotion, the colour of solitude and of desire, the colour of there seen from here, the colour of where you are not. And the colour of where you can never go.^[20]

Both times I visited *THE FIELD*, I began by experiencing *Tāhū* and finished by contemplating the piercing blue of *Hara*—walking and thinking the distance between *Tāhū*’s and *Hara*’s horizons; a distance that cannot be closed in on; that is emphatically held open. This distance may account for what Hopkinson describes as the open-ended quality that she perceives in her exhibition, which, despite including a range of transnational First Nations artists, denies viewers an affirmative vision of identity politics as a kind of quantifiable metric. Instead, Hopkinson tries to “assert Tino Rangatiratanga [absolute Indigenous sovereignty].”²¹ Her *FIELD*—unlike its precursor and namesake, whose curatorial vision imposed a sense of unity—wilfully inhabits cracks, distances, and fault lines between class and race; in so doing, it plays off the order and knowability of the International System of Units that gives the exhibition such sharp form. As Harwood writes in his incisive poem for the exhibition poster: “Caesuras are the only tangible thing/take it or leave it.”²²

Footnotes

01. For more background on *Fault*, see: www.citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/bill-culbert-and-ralph-hotere-fault/

02. Tamsen Hopkinson, email to the author, 20 June 2023.

03. Ibid.

04. Ibid.

05. David Homewood and Paris Lettau, “Hall of Mirrors,” *The Field Revisited* (Naarm: National Gallery of Victoria, 2018), 86.

06. And this was much to the chagrin of some of its artists, including Mel Ramsden, who lamented privately in a letter: “It was an absolute disaster to have my painting on a silver panelled and reflective wall.” Ramsden, quoted in Homewood and Lettau, “Hall of Mirrors,” 93.

07. Ibid, 88.

08. Tamsen Hopkinson, conversation with the author, 9 June 2023.

09. Ibid.

10. Hopkinson, email to the author, 20 June 2023.

11. Ibid.

12. Hopkinson, conversation with the author, 9 June 2023.

13. I couldn’t help but think of the large mirror portals in Jean Cocteau’s *Orphée*, of which the character Heurtebise notes: “Mirrors are the doors through which Death comes and goes. Look at yourself in a mirror all your life and you’ll see death at work.”

14. This exactly hour-long track is an equivalent curatorial gesture to the silver walls of *The Field*. It attempts to unify the individual artworks in the exhibition—or fill some of the space between them—in an aural as opposed to optical register.

15. “Capital,” *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 23 June 2023, www.etymonline.com/word/capital

16. Hopkinson, conversation with the author, 9 June 2023.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

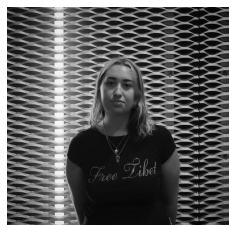
19. International Klein Blue (IKB) is the ultramarine-rich hue of blue patented by French artist Yves Klein in the mid-twentieth century.

20. Rebecca Solnit, *Field Guide to Getting Lost* (New York: Viking, 2005), 1.

21. Hopkinson, email to the author, 20 June 2023.

22. Tristen Harwood, untitled poem, in *THE FIELD*, exhibition catalogue (Naarm: Gertrude Contemporary, 2023), n.p.

Biographies



Ming Ranginui (b. 1998, Whanganui, Te Ati Haunui-a-Pāpārangi) is an artist who currently resides in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. Her gaudy sculptural works explore autonomy and tohu (signs) in her everyday. Recent exhibitions include *Late to the ball*, Season, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland (2023); *Sleigh*, Robert Heald Gallery, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2022); *Matarau*, City Gallery Wellington (2022); and *Cruel Optimism*, Artspace Aotearoa, Tāmaki Makaurau (2021).



Working predominantly with performance and film, the elegiac installations of Shannon Te Ao (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Wairangi, Ngāti Te Rangiita, Te Pāpaka-a-Māui, b. 1978, Sydney) explore fraught dynamics of indigeneity, language and loss. Te Ao draws on a range of existing literary material, including Māori lyrical sources such as whakatauki and waiata, as well as poetic and lyrical texts from popular culture. Richly layered, Te Ao's works enact a compression wherein past and present co-exist, and daily life is inextricably linked to multifarious social, cultural and philosophical histories.



Shiraz Sadiqueen (b. 1989) completed a BA in international relations at Victoria University of Wellington in 2013, and a BFA and an MFA at Elam School of Fine Arts in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Using appropriation, abstraction, and the effects of mis-recognition, Sadiqueen makes work that attempts to artistically mediate the historical conditions and conflicts in bourgeois society. Recent exhibitions include *Affirmation*, Savage Garden, Naarm Melbourne (2022); *Ends*, Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland (2022); *Securicraft*, Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau (2021); *Uncomfortable Silence*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū (2020); and *Geist*, Neo Gracie, Tāmaki Makaurau (2019).



Tamsen Hopkinson (b. 1986 Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa, Ngāti Pāhauwera) is an artist and curator based in Naarm Melbourne, Australia. She completed a BFA (Hons) and a BA from the University of Auckland in 2010. Her practice is an expression of Tino Rangatiratanga, Indigenous Sovereignty, and considers ideas around education, language and translation, materiality and sound. Hopkinson has held curatorial positions across key contemporary art organisations in Naarm over the last decade, and is the co-founder of STUDIO. Recent curatorial projects include Neighbourhood Contemporary Arts Festival (2022), co-presented by Footscray Community Arts Centre and The Substation; *STUDIO presents: Buffalo Daughter*, Northcote Social Club (2022); and *CONNECT I* (2021) and *CONNECT II* (2021), Footscray Community Arts Centre.



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